

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 remain pending in the application, and claim 1 has been amended herein merely to clarify features analyzed previously. Applicants submit, therefore, that the claim amendments do not raise new issues of patentability and should be entered even though being made in response to a Final Office Action.

Favorable reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested in view of the claim amendments and following remarks.

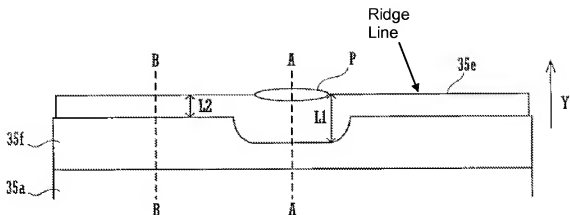
I. ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

Applicants acknowledge with appreciation the allowance of claims 6-11.

II. REJECTION OF CLAIMS 1-5 UNDER 35 USC §§ 102(b)/ 103(a)

Claims 1-3 again stand rejected pursuant to 35 USC §102(b) as being anticipated by *Kurihara*, JP 2000-330439 (*Kurihara*). Claims 4-5 again stand rejected pursuant to 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over *Kurihara* in view of other more tertiary references. Applicants respectfully request withdrawal of the rejections for at least the following reasons.

Claim 1 recites a cleaning device in which the toner catching sheet has a free length that is determined by an amount of paper dust buildup on the outer circumferential portion of the image bearing member in the lengthwise direction. Claim 1 has been amended to identify a "ridge line" to clarify the precise part of the second end portion being referred to as abutting the image bearing member. In particular, claim 1 has been amended to recite more specifically that the second end portion of the toner catching sheet has "a ridge line," and "the ridge line of the second end portion is parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member" to which it abuts. Applicants submit that *Kurihara* does not disclose or suggest such features.



For example, Fig. 3 of the present application (reproduced above) illustrates the manner in which the ridge line of the second end portion 35e is parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member (not shown) to which the ridge line of the second end portion abuts. This ensures that the cleaning unit 35 completely collects paper dust (e.g., P), and so on, which may be scraped by the cleaning blade.

In the Response to Arguments section of the Final Office Action (see Page 6), the Examiner states: (1) Fig. 8 of *Kurihara* shows the second end portion of the sheet being parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member; and (2) the “second end portions” shown in Fig. 9 of *Kurihara* are parallel in the axial direction since the two members (photoconductive drum and toner catching sheet) are aligned along an axis with each other. The Examiner states that while they may not be along the same angle with respect to each other, they are still parallel with each other. Applicants disagree with the Examiner’s characterization of *Kurihara* and assert *Kurihara* do not disclose or suggest, as claimed, that the ridge line of the second end portion is parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member to which it abuts.

A. The Examiner’s Reliance on *Kurihara* Fig. 8 Is Misplaced

Regarding the Examiner’s first comment, Fig. 8 is not relevant to the pertinent features of the claimed invention. Fig. 8 illustrates a first situation before fixing the toner-guiding sheet 101 on the fixing member 103, and Fig. 9 illustrates a second situation after fixing the sheet 101 on the member 103. Thus, Fig. 8 does not depict a device configuration that would be analogous to the invention recited in claim 1.

The Examiner and Applicants have been relying on a machine translation of *Kurihara* in applying the reference to the claimed invention. Based on the translation, Applicants believe support for the misapplication of Fig. 8 by the Examiner is found at paragraph (0024) of *Kurihara*. Machine translations do not always provide a sufficiently clear translation for analysis. As further support, therefore, Applicants note that *Kurihara*, U.S. Patent No. 6,169,867 (the *Kurihara U.S. Patent*) claims priority from the *Kurihara* reference and, in pertinent respects, appears to be an English-language counterpart thereto. The *Kurihara U.S. Patent* states in part:

In order to fix the toner-guiding sheet in a state in which a tension is applied at least in the longitudinal direction of the free end portion of the toner-guiding sheet, for example, after fixing the toner-guiding sheet 101 on the fixing member 103 in a state in which the bonding surface of the fixing member 103 for the toner-guiding sheet 101 is curved, using the pressure sensitive adhesive double coated tape 104 as shown in FIG.8, tension may be applied in the longitudinal direction of the toner-guiding sheet 101 by fixing the fixing member 103 in a curved state and then releasing the curved state by restoring the bonding surface of the fixing member 103 as shown in FIG. 9.

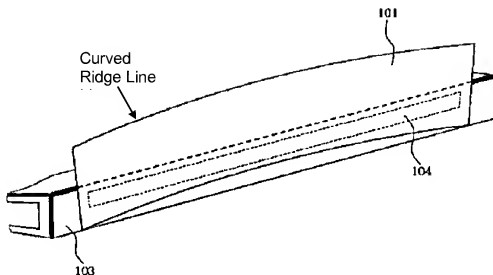
(*Kurihara U.S. Patent* at col. 8, lines 16-27.)

Based on the above description from the *Kurihara U.S. Patent*, Fig. 8 illustrates the first situation before fixing the toner-guiding sheet 101 on the fixing member 103, and Fig. 9 illustrates the second situation after fixing the sheet 101 on the member 103. Accordingly, the Examiner's reliance on *Kurihara* Fig. 8 is misplaced, and only Fig. 9 is relevant to the pertinent features of the claimed invention.

B. *Kurihara Fig. 9 Does Not Disclose the Claimed Invention*

The Examiner also states (comment (2) above) that the second end portions shown in Fig. 9 of *Kurihara* are parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member. In response to this comment, Applicants have amended claim 1 to recite the ridge line of the second end portion is parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member to which it abuts. *Kurihara* does not disclose or suggest such features. Fig. 9 of *Kurihara* is reproduced below.

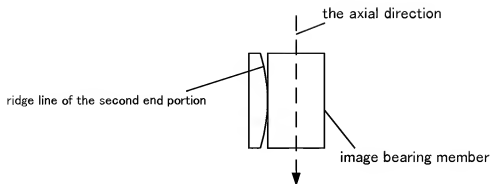
Kurihara Fig. 9:



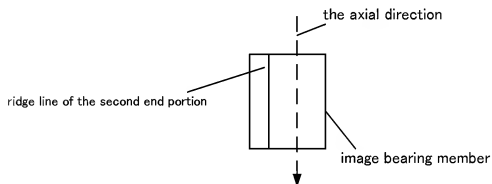
As seen in the above figure, *Kurihara* teaches a scooping sheet 101 in which the entire second end portion of the scooping sheet 101 does not completely abut an outer circumferential portion of the image bearing member. As is shown in Fig. 9 reproduced above, a ridge line of the end portion of the scooping sheet 101 is curved and thus not parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member as recited in claim 1. Consequently, this prevents the scooping sheet from completely collecting paper dust and residual toner, which are scraped off by a cleaning blade 30.

To further illustrate this feature, Applicants submit the figures below which represent top views of Fig. 9 of *Kurihara* and the claimed invention.

top view of the Fig.9



top view of the present invention



As seen in these figures, in the device of *Kurihara* the ridge line of the purported second end portion is **curved**, and therefore **not** parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member to which it abuts. In contrast, in Applicants' device the ridge line is indeed parallel in the axial direction of the image bearing member to which it abuts. Applicants therefore respectfully submit that the cleaning device of claim 1 is neither taught nor rendered obvious in view of the teachings of *Kurihara*, and the rejection of claims 1-3 should be withdrawn.

C. Rejection of Claims 4 and 5 Under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

Claims 4 and 5 stand rejected under 35 USC §103(a) based on *Kurihara* in view of previously cited *Kaji* and *Reference B*, respectively. Claims 4 and 5 depend from claim 1, and therefore are distinguished over the teachings of *Kurihara* for at least the same reasons expressed above. *Kaji* and *Reference B*, respectively, have not been found to make up for the above-discussed deficiencies in *Kurihara*.

III. CONCLUSION

Accordingly, all claims 1-11 are believed to be allowable and the application is believed to be in condition for allowance. A prompt action to such end is earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner feel that a telephone interview would be helpful to facilitate favorable prosecution of the above-identified application, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

Should a petition for an extension of time be necessary for the timely reply to the outstanding Office Action (or if such a petition has been made and an additional extension is necessary), petition is hereby made and the Commissioner is authorized to charge any fees (including additional claim fees) to Deposit Account No. 18-0988, Reference No. KOMOP0111US.

Respectfully submitted,

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